



Austin Retired Teachers Association

Regular Monthly Meeting

Friday, January 9, 2026

Hybrid Meeting: in Person or Zoom at Faith Lutheran Church



AGENDA

ZOOM LOG-IN/SOCIAL TIME: 9:15 a.m.–9:45 a.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85025126693?pwd=JBbLTGRS9mmlbQ9rFzkobSRrRhVfVJ.1>

Meeting ID: 850 2512 6693 Passcode: Retired

*****ARTA Meet & Greet Commitment!*****

GATHERING:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1) Call to Order/Announcements | Norma Jost |
| a. Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. and Texas flags | Harishini Earnest |
| b. Inspiration | Marilyn Gregory |
| 2) PROGRAM: | |
| Introduction of Speaker | Ellen Bell |

**“A Journey from Strangers to Friends”
Johanna Stahl Mandel, Executive Director of Capital City Village**

----- Happy New Year Exercise with Laurie Barber -----
Five Door Prizes with Catherine van Zanten/Break

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 3) Introduction of Guests/New Members | Betty Zschesche |
| 4) ARTA Foundation Report/Memorial Tributes | Glenda Black & Linda Harvey |
| 5) BUSINESS and COMMITTEE REPORTS: | |
| a. Approval of December 12, 2025, Minutes | Marcia Caldwell |
| b. Treasurer’s Report | Tony Dishner |
| c. Nominating Committee Report | Joe Ramirez |
| d. Membership Report | Bonnie Cross & Terry Morganti-Fisher |
| e. Volunteer Services/Community Involvement Update | Marsha Lyons-Gray |
| f. Legislative Update | Craig Campbell & Gloria Lenoir |
| g. ARTA Birthday Luncheon Update March 13 | Mary Lou Clayton |
| h. March 25 TRTA House of Delegates Live | Joe Ramirez |
| i. Jumpstart Read for the Record – Signups in January for 2/26 | Norma Jost |
| j. Announcements and Reminders | Norma Jost |
| k. Door Prizes | G. Lenoir & C. van Zanten |
| 6) Adjournment | Norma Jost |

**Next Meeting: February 13, 2026, “Heart Health”
Dr. Joaquin Cigarroa of St. David’s Healthcare**

TRTA Photo Policy: If a TRTA member wishes not to be photographed, recorded, or appear in TRTA promotional items, the member should avoid any cameras in the area.
Refer to the meeting packet for the full text of this policy.

Follow us at our ARTA Website, Facebook & Instagram sites:

Website <https://austinrta.org/>, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TRTA.org>, Instagram https://www.instagram.com/austin_rta



Austin Retired Teachers Association Meeting Highlights, December 12, 2025 In Person at Faith Lutheran Church and on Zoom

Joyce Clendennen, ARTA Historian



ARTA President Norma Jost welcomed everyone and said we need new members to protect our pension.



Lucia Facundo led the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.



Nancy Barr, counselor and group coach, discussed "Stress Strategies for the Holidays."



ARTA members attended the amazing Sistine Chapel Experience at Barton Creek Square mall on December 11, 2025, courtesy of TRTA. It included a historical overview, a movie on the chapel, and an impressive laser light show of images in the chapel.



ARTA Foundation Treasurer Linda Harvey reported that we need more scholarship funds to reach our goal of \$16,800.



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from ARTA!



ARTA members, including Marie Acosta, Connie Acosta, Doris Moore, and Jerrilyn Zoch, enjoyed delicious holiday refreshments.





Austin Retired Teachers Association
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting
Friday, December 12, 2025
Via In person/Zoom



The regular monthly meeting of the Austin Retired Teachers Association was held December 12, 2025, in person and via Zoom. In attendance there were 76 in person and 10 on Zoom, for a total of 86 attendees.

GATHERING

Call to Order/Announcements: President Norma Jost called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. She made the general phone reminders. Jost also reminded members to take advantage of the discounted prices for viewing the Sistine Chapel Experience in the old Sears space in Barton Creek Square mall. It should be on display through April 26, 2026.

Pledges of Allegiance to the U.S. and Texas flags: Lucia Facundo led the pledges.

Inspiration: Linda Harvey provided the inspiration for the season; she called on members to navigate the holidays in peace, hope, and joy, and to set a good example for others.

PROGRAM:

Program Introduction and Presentation: Leilani Clark introduced Nancy Barr, counselor and group coach, who spoke about managing the stress of the holidays. She recognized that many members of the group are probably putting too many responsibilities on their plates. Barr suggested that gifts do not have to be the best, but rather purposeful and thoughtful. A few other suggestions were to converse and post with heart, live in the moment, exhale as long as possible to manage stress, and set loving limits, even if it means saying no.

BREAK/Exercise with Norma Jost and Yolanda Rangel

Introduction of New Members: Betty Zschiesche thanked the six new members; three were present. She reported that there were 86 members present in person and on Zoom.

ARTA Foundation Report/Memorials: Linda Harvey asked for more donations to the ARTA Foundation. It is the last month to contribute to the scholarship fund for the 2026 awards. Glenda Black led the memorial for Katherine A. Higgins. Her biographical information was in the meeting packet. A moment of silence followed.

BUSINESS and COMMITTEE REPORTS

Approval of October November 14, 2025, Minutes: The minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Tony Dishner's report will be filed for audit.

Membership Report: Terry Morganti-Fisher said ARTA had 683 members as of this meeting. She encouraged members to sign up December retirees and reminded us that only one more member was needed to begin earning the \$10 TRTA rebate per new member.

Volunteer Services/Community Involvement: Marsha Lyons-Gray reminded members ARTA's 2025 goal of volunteer hours amounts to a value of three million dollars. So far, only 32 members have sent in numbers. She asked that you continue your donations to Austin Pets Alive! and announced more opportunities will be upcoming.

Legislative Update: Craig Campbell sounded an alarm for the situation of public schools. He said our schools are under attack as the state is taking over districts, closing schools, and some candidates for

office are promising no future property school taxes. He and District 13 President Joe Ramirez warned retired teachers that without enough support, retired teachers could ultimately lose their retirement pension.

March 25 TRTA House of Delegates Live: District 13 President Joe Ramirez suggested members might want to be present in San Marcos for the House of Delegates virtual convention. President Norma Jost will select the delegates to attend. She reminded people planning to attend to bring a tablet or phone to vote.

Announcements and Reminders: President Norma Jost again reminded members to take advantage of The Sistine Chapel Experience. The sign up for Jumpstart's Read for the Record in February will take place at the January meeting. She reminded people to get more members. Catherine van Zanten thanked members for the door prize donations.

Door Prizes: Door prizes were awarded.

Adjournment: President Norma Jost adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m..

Marcia Caldwell, Secretary

Norma Jost, President

AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

TREASURER'S REPORT

December 1-31, 2025

Money Market

Initial Month Balance	\$	2,171.07		
Income/expenses	\$	0.65		
Ending Balance	\$	2,171.72	\$	2,171.72

Member Savings

Initial Month Balance	\$	528.48		
Dividend	\$	4.30		
Ending Balance	\$	532.78	\$	532.78

A+ Checking

Initial Month Balance	\$	15,257.42		
Deposits	\$	432.99		
Expenses	\$	(878.53)		
Ending Balance	\$	14,811.88	\$	14,811.88

Start-Up Certificate \$ 1,000.00 \$ 1,000.00

12 month Certificate

Initial Month Balance	\$	2,365.89		
Dividend	\$	7.90		
Ending Balance	\$	2,373.79	\$	2,373.79

24 Month Certificate

Initial Month Balance	\$	2,352.13		
Dividend	\$	8.00		
Ending Balance	\$	2,360.13	\$	2,360.13

Total			\$ 23,250.30	
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Tony Dishner
Treasurer



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a restful and joyful holiday season. As we begin 2026, I want to thank you for your continued support, dedication, and collaboration on behalf of ARTA.

I invite you to join me on **Friday, January 9**, either in person at **Faith Lutheran Church** or via **Zoom**. Our guest speaker will be **Johanna Stahl-Mandel, Executive Director of Capital City Village**, who will present “*A Journey from Strangers to Friends*.” This promises to be an informative and inspiring program.

Thanks to **Tim Lee’s leadership**, the repeal of the **Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)** and the **Government Pension Offset (GPO)** was accomplished just in time last year; however, Tim also shared at our September 2025 ARTA meeting that **TRTA membership declined by 7,000 members**. We must increase our membership to protect our pensions and benefits, to continue advocating for cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), and to defend public education. Please note we have Primary elections on March 3 (Early Voting 2/17-2/27); see more in the legislative section of the *Newsette*. This is a powerful reminder of why **ARTA/TRTA membership matters**.

We want to highlight the tremendous work our members do in the community. Please be sure to submit your **VOLUNTEER service hours** to **Dr. Marsha Lyons-Gray by January 10, 2026**.

Nominations for President, Second Vice-President, and Assistant Treasurer will be presented at our January meeting. Membership voting will take place at the February meeting, with installation in May.

We also have an exciting volunteer opportunity coming up! ARTA will support **reading at Galindo and Perez elementary schools** for *See Marcos Grow* on **February 26, 2026**. Please sign up with me at the January meeting. I will create the Signup Genius once campus teacher commitments are finalized.

Please mark your calendar for the ARTA 74th Birthday Luncheon on March 13th. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/3f6f7znp>. Payment (\$40) will be available through March 2nd at our January and February meetings (cash/check) and

on our ARTA website (\$42) <https://austinrta.org/arta-birthday-luncheon>.

Finally, the **TRTA House of Delegates Live** will convene in **San Marcos** on **March 25, 2026**. This event is open to all ARTA members who want to attend. We will have **nine delegates** (possibly 10), each of whom must have access to a smartphone or tablet. I am currently collecting names; please let me know at an ARTA meeting or email me at **njost2@yahoo.com**.

Let’s make 2026 a fantastic year for ARTA. Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to seeing you at our January meeting!

Norma Jost
ARTA President 2024–2026

We are ARTA/TRTA Members, and we:

- pay dues early or on time – our term is 7/1-6/30,
- advocate for Education; and
- publicize Who We Are and WHAT We Do for TEXAS- Volunteer Hours impact the TX Economy 1/1-12/31!

TRTA PHOTO POLICY

At public TRTA events (such as convention), including at the local, district, and state levels, photos may be taken by TRTA staff and/or volunteers. TRTA may use likenesses of its members in photographs, videos, or other digital or social media (“photo”) in its publications, including web-based publications, without payment or other consideration. If a TRTA member wishes not to be photographed, recorded, or appear in TRTA promotional items, the member should avoid any cameras in the area.

This should be in your directory, on every printed agenda, and/or posted at a sign-in table, and/or posted on screen if using technology projection, and/or announced at the beginning of meetings for every TRTA event you host or participate in.

WELCOME, NEW ARTA MEMBERS!

Welcome to the first-time ARTA members who joined after our December 12 regular meeting! Your fellow members are honored that you are now part of our organization.



We have plenty of committees that you can join. Do not hesitate to contact me at **njost2@yahoo.com** if you are interested in joining any of our committees. I will then place you in contact with the appropriate committee chairs.

Please welcome the following new ARTA members:

- Marie Acosta
- Joan Burnham
- Ami Cortes-Castillo
- Guy Davis
- Cole Reynolds
- Cynthia Rose

Norma Jost
ARTA President

IN MEMORIAM

Mildred “Midge” Hensarling Nance was born February 21, 1927, in Stephenville, Texas. She attended Tarleton College and The University of Texas in Austin, where she graduated with honors having completed in three years a B.A. degree in Psychology.

Mildred was employed as a teacher in Pflugerville Elementary School in September 1947 and married the following October. She taught at Pflugerville for four years and worked on a graduate degree during the summer months, obtaining a master's degree in psychology in 1952. She was employed as an elementary teacher in Austin ISD from 1951 to 1955. From 1962 to 1963, she was employed as a preschool teacher at All Saints Episcopal Church.

In January 1968, Mildred returned to The University of Texas to take the courses required to become a school psychologist and was employed in that capacity by Austin ISD from September 1968 through May 1984, when she retired. She always had a great love for children, and she learned to appreciate education, a value which was instilled by her parents, who were both teachers.

Mildred Nance passed away December 3, 2025, at age 98. She joined ARTA in 1985 and was a member for 40 years until the time of her death. She was also one of the last eight surviving TRTA Life Members in ARTA.

Elma Louisa Berrones was born on October 5, 1946, in Pearsall, Texas, and grew up in the nearby town of Dilley. She went on to earn her B.A. in Education from Sul Ross University and her M. Ed. in school administration from The University of Texas at Austin.

Her lifelong passion was in education, and this led her to teach in Dilley and Manor ISDs before she was hired as a kindergarten teacher at Allison Elementary School in Austin ISD in 1970. She went on to serve as a Title I reading coordinator, assistant principal and then as principal at Mathews and Kocurek elementary schools, where she guided countless students and teachers with compassion and dedication. Before retiring from AISD, Elma was a Human Resources Coordinator in the Department of Recruiting and Staffing.

After retirement, she shared her expertise by teaching at The University of Texas as an adjunct professor. She continued shaping the next generation of educators by working for the “iteach Texas” program that involved working with college graduates who wanted to earn teaching certifications.

Throughout her life, Elma Berrones was committed to her community and did volunteer work with CASA as an advocate for children. She died December 16, 2025, at age 79. She was an ARTA member from 2001 to 2018.

Mary Helen "Nena" Cuellar Quintero was born on June 18, 1939, in Lockhart, Texas. After moving to Austin as a young girl, she attended Metz Elementary and Allan Jr High before graduating from Stephen F Austin High School in 1958. She attended business school to learn administrative skills and bookkeeping.

She married Manuel H. Quintero, Jr., in 1964 and raised two daughters. She and her husband encouraged learning, so her daughters attended and graduated from multiple universities, including The University of Texas at Austin.

Before being hired as a clerk in Austin ISD in 1980, she began her career in bookkeeping at Kress's five-and-dime department store in downtown Austin, followed by 10 years of service at the Internal Revenue Service. She retired from AISD in 1996 after 15 years of service. She later volunteered as the bookkeeper for more than 10 years at her church, Holy Family ACC.

Mary Helen Quintero passed away on December 16, 2025, at age 86. She was an ARTA member from 1996 to 2025.

Joe Ramirez



NOMINATIONS FOR ARTA OFFICERS, 2026–2028

The election of Austin Retired Teachers Association officers for the 2026–2028 biennium will be conducted at the February 13 ARTA regular meeting. Names will be presented to the ARTA membership at the ARTA regular meeting on Friday, January 9.

The ARTA Nominating Committee recommends the following members for ARTA officers, 2026–2028:

- **President: Dr. Marsha Lyons-Gray**
- **Second Vice-President: Judy Wallace**
- **Assistant Treasurer: Al Weber**

Additional nominations for each office may be made from the floor at the February meeting. The person nominated should give consent to be considered and to serve.

The installation ceremony will be held at the May 8 ARTA regular meeting. Officers will assume their newly elected positions on July 1, 2026, and serve through June 30, 2028.

ARTA officers continuing their 2024–2026 terms are:

- **First Vice-President: Terry Morganti-Fisher**
- **Secretary: Marcia Caldwell**
- **Treasurer: Tony Dishner**

We also extend our appreciation to outgoing officers President Norma Jost, Second Vice-President Patty Young, and Assistant Treasurer Wendy Abel for their years of service as ARTA officers.

*Joe Ramirez & Dr. Rosemary Morrow,
Nominating Committee Co-Chairs*

ARTA BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON SAVE THE DATE!

Please come to ARTA’s 74th Birthday Luncheon, Friday, March 13, 2026, 11:30 a.m., at Chez Zee, 5406 Balcones Drive, Austin, 78731. We will hear from Judy Maggio and Wesley Rose from ATX Good News. Our ARTA Sweetheart will be honored. The cost of the luncheon is \$40, which includes free valet parking.

Please pay and reserve by March 2. You may pay online at <https://austinrta.org/arta-birthday-luncheon>, bring a check or cash to the January 9 or February 13 meetings, or mail a

check to Mary Lou Clayton, 2309 Sunny Slope Drive, Austin, TX, 78703.

Special thanks to Norma Jost for creating this sign-up link: <https://tinyurl.com/yck7mfer>. Please do not miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate ARTA’s 74th birthday!

*Mary Lou Clayton
ARTA Birthday Luncheon Chair*

TRTA DISTRICT 13 HOUSE OF DELEGATES LIVE! – MARCH 25, 2026

TRTA: CELEBRATING OUR CONNECTION TO YOU!

SAVE THE DATE!

HOUSE OF DELEGATES LIVE! MARCH 25, 2026

COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

RIO GRANDE CITY | CORPUS CHRISTI
EDNA | CYPRESS | BEAUMONT
HUNTSVILLE | JACKSONVILLE
PITTSBURG | WICHITA FALLS | ALLEN
WHITE SETTLEMENT
WACO | SAN MARCOS | ABILENE
BROWNWOOD | AMARILLO
LUBBOCK
MIDLAND | EL PASO | SAN ANTONIO

In lieu of a traditional state convention this year, TRTA will be holding the TRTA House of Delegates Live!, which will be broadcast to 20 different sites across the state on **Wednesday, March 25**. District 13 delegates will meet at the San Marcos Activity Center (501 E. Hopkins St) in San Marcos from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This year’s theme is “TRTA: Celebrating Our Connection to You!”

Delegates from the 14 chapters in our district will vote electronically on the election of TRTA state officers for the 2026–2028 biennium as well as four proposed amendments to the TRTA Bylaws. Delegates will need to bring a smartphone or tablet connected to their personal email address to cast their votes. TRTA has not released the proposed amendments at this time, but these will be emailed to ARTA members through the listserv later in January and published in the February *Newsette*.

Austin RTA is currently projected to have nine voting delegates along with alternates; however, ARTA is on the cusp of obtaining a tenth delegate. For this to happen, we need at least four members who have not yet renewed their \$50 TRTA/ARTA dues or additional first-time members to join both organizations before



February 28 to guarantee this additional delegate.

ARTA President Norma Jost will work with membership to determine who will serve as voting delegates. These delegates must communicate with our membership before March 25 to address one of the proposed amendments to the state bylaws. **The TRTA Executive Committee is proposing an amendment to raise state dues from \$35 to \$50 beginning on July 1, 2027.** Your feedback is essential on how the ARTA delegates will cast their votes on this amendment.

Regardless of whether you are serving as a voting delegate or not, I invite all of you to attend the House of Delegates Live! Session followed by an abbreviated District 13 Spring Conference after lunch. There is no charge for lunch, and incoming District 13 officers will be installed during the afternoon conference. District 13 members who recruited first-time TRTA members between March 1, 2025, and February 28, 2026, will also be eligible for one of eight \$50 checks from the “Each One-Bring One” drawing that will take place at the business meeting.

*Joe Ramirez
TRTA District 13 President*

MEMBER BENEFITS COMMITTEE

In an email sent by TRS to TRS-Care members in December 2025, CVS and Target pharmacies will no longer be part of the UnitedHealthcare network as of January 1, 2026. According to the TRS-Care update, this is because CVS and Express Scripts by Evernorth were not able to reach an agreement through contract negotiations. Express Scripts service representatives are available 24/7 to help customers transfer prescriptions to an in-network pharmacy or coordinate new prescriptions with your doctors. For help in doing so, call **844-863-5324**. The email also contains links for tools that will help you transition to a new pharmacy, set up home delivery, contact customer service, and download the Express Scripts Mobile App.

Don’t forget that UnitedHealthcare members are eligible to participate in SilverSneakers, which can help in meeting fitness goals for the new year by offering free membership at various

locations around Austin or by using the online videos available. Visit the UnitedHealthcare website and click on SilverSneakers to learn more.

As always, visit the **TRTA.org** website to learn about membership benefits.

*Laura Grayson & Lucia Facundo
Member Benefits Committee Co-chairs*

**VOLUNTEER SERVICES/
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Progressing Toward 2026 after a Successful 2025

Community involvement is most visible through active participation in local events, volunteering, and supporting community initiatives. These are key to establishing our presence. By showing up and lending our voices, we demonstrate our commitment and encourage others to do likewise.

In spring 2025, we committed to donating three million dollars in in-kind services through volunteer work. By December 28, 2025, with 69 of nearly 700 members reporting, we've contributed \$1,983,778.16 and continue working toward our goal. You may submit additional hours to Dr. Marsha Gray by texting (512-924-2049), email (marsha_gray@att.net) or snail mail (Marsha Gray @ 3901 Amy Circle, Austin, Texas 78759). **PLEASE SUBMIT BY January 10 for your hours to be counted.**

A recent TRS study shows our retirement funds no longer meet “Actuarial Soundness” status. Now, it’s crucial to inform the public and elected officials about our contributions to the Texas economy.

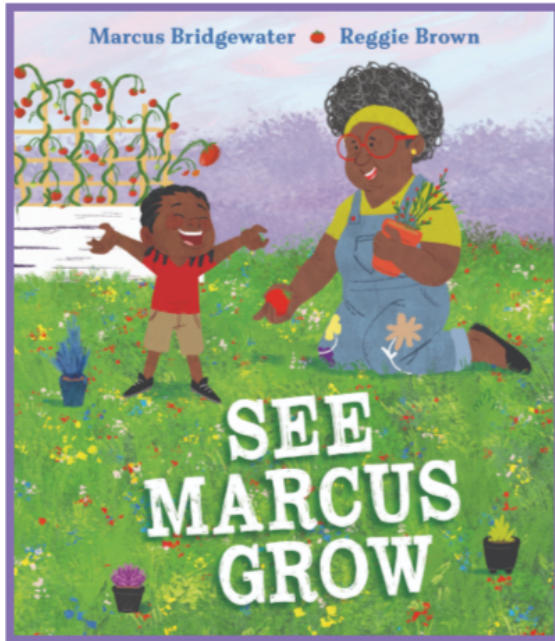
Sometimes I sound like a broken record, but as educator Madeline Hunter said, it can take up to 100 attempts to change behavior or performance. Attending meetings—either in person or online—counts toward your volunteer hours, as does supporting our chapter projects like Austin Pets Alive!, SAFE Alliance, and Lions Club eyeglasses drive. Other projects include East Side Community Mission, Moore-Hancock Farmstead, area superintendents’ initiatives, Sistine Chapel events, political activities, church assistance, TRS activities, childcare, elder care, and more. You may count up to 12 hours per day with time measured from door to door.



Thank you for supporting our fellow educators and our community through Volunteer Services.

Marsha Lyons-Gray, Chair
Volunteer Services/Community Involvement Committee

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



Jumpstart Read for the Record 2/26/26!!
Sign up at the January 9th ARTA Meeting!

Better ATX (formerly known as the Assistance League of Austin)—Giving back with every purchase

Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE, located at 4901 Burnet Road, is the third and current location of our high quality and affordable resale store. Inside, you'll find gently used items—from clothing and furniture to books, art, and collectibles—all generously donated by our community, and when we have more than we can sell, we partner with other nonprofits to share those goods, helping neighbors in need and keeping usable items out of the landfill.

Better ATX programs include (more info at our website): <https://www.betteratx.org/>

- *Better ATX Clothes for Kids*
- *Better ATX Toy Cart*
- *Better ATX School Communities*
- *Better ATX Families*
- *Better ATX Scholars*

- *Better ATX Assault Survivors*
- *Better ATX Waste Not*

Three Ways to Join the Better ATX Mission

1. Volunteer:
<https://www.volgistics.com/appform/663843163>
2. Donate:
https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/x1_NcmnFyc3C7HnpQjQMag
3. Shop at the **Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE**;
4901 Burnet Road, 78756
Shopping Wednesday–Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Donations Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Every purchase, every donation, and every visit moves our mission forward.

Stay in the Know

Follow us to view weekly Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE finds and learn more about our programs:

Facebook Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BetterATX>

Instagram Link:

<https://www.instagram.com/betteratx/>

Stay Connected Link:

<https://www.betteratx.org/#sign-up>

IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE TO VISIT THE SISTINE CHAPEL EXPERIENCE!

Over 80 TRTA members from seven chapters in District 13 and their guests attended the free exhibit of the Sistine Chapel Experience at Barton Creek Square mall on December 11. Austin is the worldwide launch site of this interactive display, which is the only one on the Sistine Chapel that has been approved by the Vatican.

TRTA members who were unable to attend on that day can still visit the exhibit with a discounted rate of \$20 during its scheduled run through April 26, 2026. You can either scan the QR Code in the flyer found in this month's *Newsette* for the discounted rate or click [HERE](#) to purchase them.

The Sistine Chapel Experience is open Wednesdays through Fridays from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. while it is here in Austin. You **MUST** make an online reservation and purchase tickets electronically before attending. Additional information can be found at

<https://sistinechapelexperience.com/austin/>.



You can also review the detailed visitors' guide that was emailed through the ARTA Listserv in late November.

The Sistine Chapel Experience is in the former Sears department store on the south side of the mall. Members should enter through the south entrance of that store on the ground floor level. Parking is available immediately to the south of that entrance in **Lot B9** as well as in the lot between the exhibit and the AMC movie theater complex. There is no need to enter the main part of the mall.

NO CASH will be taken for souvenirs, refreshments, or the special TRTA admission rate. All purchases at the exhibit must be made with a

credit or debit card. Gift cards for friends and family can be purchased [HERE](#) (click to open the hyperlink).

TRTA members can either apply for paid or volunteer positions with the Sistine Chapel Experience during the time it is on display at Barton Creek Square mall. A detailed list of potential opportunities can be found in this edition of the *Newsette*. Interested members need to contact Martha Watanabe at mcwatanabe@sceyllc.com or call at (512) 983-0456.

Joe Ramirez
TRTA District 13 President

SISTINE CHAPEL EXPERIENCE AT BARTON CREEK MALL
(Former Sears Department Store)

Role	Primary Focus	Hourly Rate / Monthly Range	Notes
Greeter / Usher	First point of contact; manages guest flow and ticket validation	\$17-\$20/hr	Sets tone for guest experience; reliability essential
Tour Guide / Experience Host	Leads tours, provides educational commentary, manages crowd pacing	\$20-\$25/hr	Strong communication and storytelling skills required
Barista / Café Attendant (if applicable)	Prepares drinks/snacks; maintains cleanliness and POS accuracy	\$18-\$22/hr + tips	Experienced Barista preferred
Merchandise Store Representative	Sales, product display, POS transactions, and inventory accuracy	\$17-\$21/hr	Encourages collaboration and upselling
Maintenance	Maintains cleanliness, restocks restrooms, and ensures safety and presentation standards by performing repair tasks	\$16-\$19/hr	Experience with minor repairs


THE SISTINE CHAPEL
 EXPERIENCE
 INVITES YOU TO:





MICHELANGELO'S MASTERPIECE LIKE NEVER BEFORE!
AS PART OF OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ORGANIZERS, TRTA MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES WILL RECEIVE 25% OFF THEIR TICKETS BY USING THE SPECIAL QR CODE OR LINK PROVIDED BELOW.
WE ARE ALSO SEEKING LOCAL TEAM MEMBERS TO JOIN OUR STAFF DURING THE FIVE-MONTH AUSTIN ENGAGEMENT. POSITIONS INCLUDE GUEST SERVICES, RETAIL, HOSPITALITY, AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT — A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF A WORLD CLASS CULTURAL EVENT.


TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



TO APPLY FOR EMPLOYMENT, PLEASE CONTACT MARTHA WATANABE AT [MCWATANABE@SCEYLLC.COM](mailto:mcwatanabe@sceyllc.com) OR (512) 983-0456
WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXPERIENCE CELEBRATING ART, FAITH, AND HISTORY!
PARTIES, EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, PRIVATE EXPERIENCE



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

We have election dates coming up. Norma Jost shared Ballotpedia and here are a couple of good links:
https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_House_of_Representatives_elections,_2026
https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_State_Senate_elections,_2026

I am in State Representative District 49 and the following are the Democrat candidates. There are no Republican candidates.

Table with 2 columns: District 49 and a list of Democrat candidates including Kimmie Ellison, Montserrat Garibay, Gigs Hodges, Robin Lerner, Josh Reyna, Sam Slade, Kathie Tovo, and Shenghao Wang.

Check out your districts to see who is running.

Here is the Primary election schedule from https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/important-election-dates.shtml#2026. Check the link for more information:

Table with election schedule details. Header: **These dates are subject to changes from the 2025 legislative session** Longer calendars are on the Conducting Your Elections pages when available. Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - Primary Election. Rows include: First day to file for a place on the Primary ballot for precinct chair candidates (Tuesday, September 9, 2025); First day to file for all other candidates (Saturday, November 8, 2025); Filing deadline for primary candidates (Monday, December 8, 2025 at 6:00 PM); First day to apply for a ballot by mail (Thursday, January 1, 2026*); Last Day to Register to Vote (Monday, February 2, 2026); First Day of Early Voting (Tuesday, February 17, 2026*); Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received, not Postmarked) (Friday, February 20, 2026); Last Day of Early Voting (Friday, February 27, 2026); Last day to Receive Ballot by Mail (Tuesday, March 3, 2026 (Election Day) at 7:00 p.m. or Wednesday, March 4, 2026).

Let us support those who believe in public education and funding it.

Gloris Lenoir
ARTA Legislative Committee Co-chair

**January 2026
ARTA Membership Update**

Happy New Year! Our focus is to get as many new or renewing members (\$50 level) by **Feb. 28th** to maximize our rebate from TRTA. Please help! Thank you for helping us add a 10th delegate to the upcoming March 25th statewide meeting. What WE do is paramount to supporting ALL Texas retired educator pensions and benefits.

The Membership Committee sends its appreciation to all our members. We ask that you please help us by sharing the membership form and our website link: <https://austinrta.org/membership> with a retired friend.
Many thanks!

Terry Morganti-Fisher & Bonnie Cross, ARTA Membership Committee Co-chairs



Membership Form: AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ARTA)
ANNUAL ARTA & TRTA MEMBERSHIP DUES – Supporting ALL Retired School Personnel

To be a member of ARTA, you must **ALSO** be a member of the *TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION*(TRTA) Please pay **BOTH** your membership dues online at our ARTA Website:
<https://austinrta.org/membership>

or

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO USE THE ARTA WEBSITE, please complete this form *AND SEND IT WITH* a check payable to **ARTA** for **\$50.00**

****If you have your TRTA membership dues deducted monthly or annually by TRS, TRTA or AMBA, please *COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT WITH* a check payable to **ARTA** for **\$15.00****

Mail to: Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer
2218 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660-5067

NAME _____

PHONE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

CIRCLE: Do you want to be contacted by the ARTA Telephone Tree for meeting reminders? **YES** **NO**

For new members only: Please list the name of recruiter: _____

➔ If you would like to pay by credit card, complete your card information on page 2 of this form.


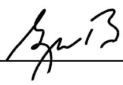
For treasurers' use only:


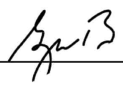
TRTA Member# _____	Payment Date: _____	Payment Amount: <input type="checkbox"/> Check # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cash _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card/Debit _____
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Page 2 Membership Form: AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ARTA)

➔ If you would like to pay by credit card, please complete your card information and mail to
Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer
2218 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660-5067

Please charge my card:		<input type="checkbox"/> Am Express	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa
Card Number: _____					
Expiration Date: _____	Amount: <input type="checkbox"/> \$52.00 (\$50.00 dues + \$2.00 fee)				
CVC Code: _____	<i>or</i>				
Zip Code: _____	If you have your TRTA membership dues deducted monthly or annually by TRS, TRTA or AMBA, please pay				
	Amount: <input type="checkbox"/> \$17.00 (\$15.00 dues + \$2.00 fee)				
Signature _____					

	1234
DATE <input type="text"/>	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF< ARTA	\$ 50.00
<i>Fifty dollars and 00/00</i>	DOLLARS <i>f</i>
FOR <i>ARTA and TRTA dues paid together</i>	
⑆23456789 ⑆890 567⑆	

	1234
DATE <input type="text"/>	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF< ARTA	\$ 15.00
<i>Fifteen dollars and 00/00</i>	DOLLARS <i>f</i>
FOR <i>ARTA dues</i>	
⑆23456789 ⑆890 567⑆	